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# Towards a Mestizaj Identity: A Post-colonial Reading of Isabel Allende's *Zorro*

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**Abstract**

*Zorro*, a novel of quasi-romance structure, has been written by Chilean writer Isabel Allende in 2005. She is a cousin of Salvador Allende, Chile's first socialist president who was assassinated during the 1973 military coup d'état. Being mostly analyzed within the framework of Feminism, gender-related issues, or socio-political approaches, Isabel Allende, therefore, has been regarded by literary critics as a politically exiled woman writer who seeks to portray a range of female characters who are caught inside a patriarchal socio-cultural context, seek to free themselves, and search for self-recognition. Within the postcolonial context, however, her fiction can be interpreted from quiet different perspectives. Elaborating on certain critical concepts from post-colonialism, particularly Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity and the transculturation proposed by Fernando Ortiz and Angel Rama, the present article explores the process by which Allende creeps through the mist of clashing voices and opposing means of representation to form her ideal model both in character and in writing mode: a transcultural phenomena that ends at a negating negotiability in its especial form of characterization.


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## 1. Introduction

The last quarter of the twentieth century is a unique age of various *posts* in cultural and literary criticism. Their increasing emergence casts doubt on the trustworthiness of the elder categories and suggests them to be not the comprehensible measure for approaching the related realms any more. Under the weight of the *post* critiques, the assumed hegemony of western thought has been de-stabilized and forced to re-think itself. However, some of the *post* thinkers realize that the elder categories cannot be simply wiped out. In fact, certain thinkers like Homi Bhabha point to the transitivity of cultural approaches and in this way issue a number of controversial challenges. As a matter of fact, the inventive method of in-betweenness and liminality in dealing with contemporary cultures is strongly correlated with their corollary openness. In other words, it is the in-between analysis of colonial methods and discourses that has opened a way towards postcolonial thinking.

The existence of opposing forces is the prevailing image of postcolonial literary texts that causes them to enter the process of hybridization. Colonial subjects appropriate the colonizers' tools and create new objects which belong to none of the sides of the binary opposition, neither the colonizer nor the colonized. They do it not just for a simple mimicry of those in power; rather, they do it in order to form a new subversive medium for self-representation. Consequently, a postcolonial text is actually a transcultural whole heading to a negotiable goal that paves the way for a dialogue among contradictory voices.

## 2. Methodology

The theoretical framework I have drawn up for the present study focuses on Homi Bhabha's theories, in particular his theory of hybridity, in tandem with the Latin American concept of transculturation. The reason I insist on using Latin American theorists is the fact that the literary corpus of my study is written by a Latin American writer, therefore such a framework can do more justice to a critical reading of her novel.

In order to apply the aforementioned theories to Allende's novel, the conceptual tools selected include the concept of mestizo which is a cultural concept and a character type. Zorro will be analysed in the light of the mestizo and the mestizaje identity. In analyzing Zorro, I focus my attention on the characters as well as the places or settings, and show how both the environment and the people exhibit the same formative features. In Zorro, place is prominent. In other words, places and characters commingle to such a point as to represent each other. As the characters move towards hybridization, so do the lands. In other words, the settings have the potential to be labelled as mestizo. Throughout the novel, characters that are the symbols of various social groups come together. At first, they have an inversive strategy toward each other: being located within the contact zone of California, they enter a dialogue and the process of hybridization occurs. Zorro is not merely a national hero, who belongs only to a particular cultural zone and defends only particular nationalistic aims, rather, as a character of a mestizaje identity, he goes beyond predetermined borders to form a transcultural character. Also, I aim to show that the hero is not just one person, but the coming together of three characters, an American Indian, a European and a hybrid. The soul of the hero is reincarnated in all three, and the triangle of Zorro is thus formed, to comprise certain qualities from each of the three characters. Again, I aim to demonstrate that the cultural formation in this case is not a negating process. No culture is pure and authentic. The heterogeneity of cultural phenomena can be shown in the gradual formation of a transcultural Zorro with a mestizaje identity.

## 3. Theories

### 3.1 Hybridity

Bhabha's most significant essays are collected in his book entitled *The Location of Culture* (1994). In this book he undermines the concept of the polarized world, erodes the dichotomy between self and other, and ultimately introduces some controversial concepts such as the hybridity of cultures. Hybridity as such denotes the impurity of

cultures and the quality of mixed-ness to be inherent in all forms of identity. Within the domain of cultural identities, it points to the fact that "cultures are not discrete phenomena", rather "they are always in contact with one another"; this fact, thus, creates a cultural mixed-ness, a space within which no hint of purity or authenticity can be traced (Huddart, 2006, 6-7). This point is emphasized by Loomba, too, when she puts forth that "neither colonizer nor colonized is independent of the other. Colonial identities – on both sides of the divide – are unstable, agonized, and in constant flux" (1998, 178).

In elaborating hybridity, Bhabha undermines the traditional concept of the other as something or someone beyond the self. For him the other "emerges forcefully, within cultural discourse when we think we speak most intimately and indigenously between ourselves" (Bhabha, 1990: 4). He does not uphold the idea supporting the separation of the self and the other. More than that, he asserts that the self and the other are continuously changing place in an incessant process of hybridization. Neither the East nor the West can be attributed with fix and definite attributes such as self and other. They repeatedly change place and their coming together in in-between spaces creates hybridity.

For Bhabha, postcolonial resistance does not exclusively denote the inversive strategies negating the dominant discourse. Hybridity and hybridization, i.e. the ongoing process of hybridity, as a postcolonial site for resistance, therefore, works as a stratagem for negotiation between "the dichotomies of colonizer and the colonized, self and other, East and West" (Bracken, 1999: 506). Being neither a mere negation of other cultures nor politically oppositional action, resistance for Bhabha emerges out of "an ambivalence produced within the rules of recognition of dominating discourses as they articulate the signs of cultural difference" (Loomba,1998, 177). Hybridity, in this sense, acts as "a means of evading the replication of the binary categories of the past and developing new anti-monolithic models of cultural exchange and growth" (Ashcroft, 1995: 183). Bhabha suggests that the colonial authority is hybrid and ambivalent; therefore, the colonized are provided with opportunities enough "to subvert the master discourse" (Das, 2005, 367). In fact, hybridity, in Bhabha's own words, "unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power" (1985, 173).

### 3.2 Transculturation

Within the context of Latin American societies, the concept of hybridity can be interchangeably used with transculturation. Actually, transculturation was coined by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz. As a case study focusing mainly on Cuban society but capable of being generalized over all Latin America, Ortiz's work indicates the phenomenon of cultural contacts. He does not consider the cultural contact as a one way relation; rather it is a relation in which all members actively participate; so he observes transculturation to be "more fitting term" in comparison to acculturation (Ortiz, 1995, 98). Ortiz believes that one does not do justice to the definition of cultural contact, if he/she limits it to mere acculturation and deculturation. For him, moving from one culture to another cannot be simply defined in terms of acculturation and deculturation, as both of them having colonial ideological connotation. Acculturation connotes "the process of absorption of one culture by another" (Ashcroft, 1998: 58), while deculturation means "the loose or uprooting of a previous culture" (Ortiz, 1995, 102). Ortiz argues that there is also another process at work called neoculturation the result of which being "similar to that of the reproductive process between individuals: the offspring always has something of both parents but is always different from each of them" (1995, 103).

In this way not only does Ortiz deny the passivity of the Other in resisting "modernizing force", he also attempts to historicize the active centrality of it in forming and constituting national identity in Latin American states. Actually, Ortiz sees the Other as both "the contributor to future rhetorical traces" and "a decisive participant in the formation of peripherally modern societies" (Campa, 1999, 66). Actually, what is fundamental for local cultures to be ever able to survive within global culture is the dynamic of transformation. Such transformation which is in essence "transcultural" is actually the "appropriation of modernity by colonized society" (Ashcroft, 31- 32). This way both local and metropolitan groups enter a dialogue through which they affect each other. The strategies employed by Latin Americans for creating such transcultural transformations are manifold. Being called interpolation, such strategies aim at interpolating the colonized culture into the dominant discourse in order to "release the representation of local realities" (Ashcroft, 31-32).

In elaborating over the term, however, there has been created some controversies. Miguel Barnet, for instant, sees transculturation as a coalescent force which brings different cultures together in order to form a unified culture. In contrast to him, Antonio Benitez-Rojo and Gustav Perez Firmat are of the view that "transculturation intensifies the interplay between rival cultural discourses and cause their irresolvable contradictions to continue indefinitely" (Hawley, 2001, 437). Transculturation as such gives rise to a hybrid culture, or precisely speaking, to a continuous cultural hybridization in which the metropolitan centre and native periphery can no longer be separated.

It was, however, the Uruguayan critic Angel Rama who introduced transculturation in to the field of literature and literary studies. He found Ortiz's approach to be applicable to narrative forms. He turned transculturation from being a mere scientific method (Ortiz was an anthropologist) to a "creative understanding of the way transmission occurs between different cultures, particularly those in dissimilar positions of power" (Campa, 1999, 74). As in the case of Ortiz, the concept of inclusion and interpolation plays a significant part. In Rama's interpretation of transculturation, i.e. he does not consider the cultural transmission as a mere acculturation. In his book, *Transculturation in Latin American Narrative* (1982), he makes use of Ortiz's concept of transculturation, concentrates on Latin American novel, and deals with literature as an intertextual web. He observes that modern Latin American novel is an amalgamation of a variety of ethnicities, cultures, languages, and temporalities. Transculturation, thus, provides an adequate way for reading and analyzing such an extraordinary form of intertextuality. For Rama, transculturation has the potentiality to become "a mode of articulating and reading Latin America's specific form of cultural hybridity in its multitemporal, multicultural dimensions, an arche-writing or signifying that also includes literature" (Campa, 1999, 66). In this sense, the term "transculturadores" as introduced by Rama encompasses those writers who mediate between the various tensive fields emerged out of "the diverse cultures, languages and worlds that coexist in different relations of power in their countries" (Bernal, 2002).

### 3.3 Mestizo

Mestizo is a Spanish word. It originated from a Latin word, mixticius, which means mixed (http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/mestizo). Mestizo is a term denotes aspects of cultural exchange and miscegenation between the different cultural groups mostly within the geographical zone of Caribbean, the Americas and the Indian Ocean regions (Ashcroft, 1998, 136-137). Mestizo as defined by *Global Dictionary of Theology: A Resource for the Worldwide Church*, refers to a population in Latin America who resulted from interbreeding of European colonizers and native colonized people (2008, 414).

The history of the term dated back to Spanish colonial period. Upon their arrival at Latin America, the Spanish Conquistadors created a social caste system which was mostly constructed on the basis of race and it showed people's social status and importance. It fell under four categories. Firs group was called Peninsular. They were the most powerful and racially superior class in this category. They were those people of Spanish descent who were born also in Spain. The second group was called Criollo. Like the first group, they were of Spanish descent, but unlike it, they were born in Americas. Indio was the name of the third class denotes the American natives and indigenous population (Meyer and Sherman, 2006, 195-196). The last place was given to the class of Negro who were African slave and their descendants. The mentioned system has a pyramidical form. The more a group distanced from the top, the least of social right it was given to. The mestizo was placed in between the first two and the third group. Its luminal position gives it the social rights less than Peninsular and Criollo yet more than Indio and Negro. Its liminality or in between-ness caused it to connote impurity in those days. Therefore, like hybridity, mestizo was initially a pejorative term. It emanated originally from within colonial discourse connoting racial discrimination and racial impurity so much so that some historians like Michael C. Meyer and William L. Sherman, in the early days of Spanish colonial rule, state that mestizo "was almost synonymous with bastard" (2006, 211). In the course of the time, however, it changed use. Nowadays, the term turned into a positive stand because interchange between various cultural groups generates a process of hybridization that constitutes the most fundamentally potential aspects of new cultural phenomena.

## 4. Analysis

The concept of mestizo plays a central role in the story of *Zorro*. In some points in the story the characters and place settings are inseparably intermingled. Therefore, although the setting of the story apparently encompasses two places, i.e. California and Spain, I can say that the story has three distinct settings because California at the beginning of the story is totally different from California at the end.

The author sets her story in three places. The settings follow a circular line and end up geographically in the same place as it begins. The first part of the story happens in California between the years 1790-1810. This part includes a familial background of Diego de la Vega's life before his birth, his childhood and adolescence prior to his being sent into Spain. It is a time, Diego spends most of his time with the indigenous people who belong mostly to his mother side, learns their native crafts and knowledge, and comes to an understanding of the world through their eyes; a world that has not yet disenchanted and is governed by magical relations. Part two, three and four show him in Spain between the years 1810-1812, 1812-1814, and late 1814-early 1815 respectively. During this phase Diego de la Vega is sent to Spain to learn fencing under a distinguished fencing master, Manuel Escalante. In contrast to his homeland, he is encountered with the enlightenment of Europe and experiences a totally different view towards life. His American Indian and later European versions of world view are combined together to form a new character out of Diego de la Vega. Zorro emerges. In part five that begins in 1815, the hybrid Zorro returns to Alta California to restore justice to the land.

### 4.1 First part: California, Diego de la Vega, and the native Indians

The portrayal of the lands and the characters in *Zorro* are continuously intermingled as if the land represents its inhabitants and vice versa. The portrayal of California in the first part of the novel shows the land and its inhabitants as having majorly the aboriginal features. They are, therefore, portrayed and characterized just in the phase of abrogation and inversive reactions.

The beginning pages of the first part, describes the land and its natives through the eyes of the Spanish colonizers, Padre Mendoza and Captain Alejandro de la Vega, who misunderstood the Indians and thus considered them as primitive uncivilized tribes that should be civilized. The lack of understanding was actually the primary force that "a multitude of Indians from the Chumash, Shoshone, and other tribes…were not always overly cordial in welcoming" (Zorro, 5) the Spanish settlers particularly the religious missionaries. Actually,

*"Those native peoples were confounded by the mystery o f the crucified man the whites worshiped, and they could not understand the advantages of living contrary to their inclinations in this world in order to enjoy a hypothetical well – being in another. In the paradise of the Christians, they might take their ease on a cloud and strum a harp with the angels, but the truth was that in the afterward most would rather hunt bears with their ancestors in the land of the great Spirits. Another thing they could not understand was why the foreigners planted a flag in the ground, marked off imaginary lines, claimed that area as theirs, and then took offense if anyone came onto it in pursuit of a deer. The concept that you could possess land was as unfathomable to them as that of dividing up the sea."*
(Zorro, 5-6)

While the Indians were smart and intelligent people who "developed different specialties" so much so that "the Spanish were impressed with them" (Zorro, 5), Padre Mendoza, the Spanish priest considered them as ignorant people who should obey their Spanish masters and he could not comprehend why they ever made riots against their Spanish masters. Actually, he believes that "those poor creatures were innocent lambs of God who sinned out of

ignorance, not vice. If they were rebelling against the colonizers, they must have good reason (Zorro, 6); and therefore, they should be educated. However, a kind of education the Spanish offered the natives headed towards obedience and servitude and not knowledge, and it is while they were free people. The priest, Padre Mendoza "taught" them "catechism classes and arithmetic, to enable the neophytes, as the baptized Indians were called, to count hides, candles, corn, and cows, but no reading or writing, which was learning that had no practical application in that place" (Zorro, 6). Actually, in his opinion it was dangerous to give Indians proper education because "it put bold ideas into their heads" (Zorro, 44). The Spanish did not allow Indian children to attend the city school and the Spanish teacher told the authorities that "if any Indian so much as stuck his nose into his 'honorable establishment of learning" he would certainly leave there (Zorro, 46). It was one of the reason that they could not cope completely with the Christian life and career the religious missionaries instructed them and it was part of the reason the Spanish friars complain that,

*"The Indians prefer to live unclothed, in straw huts, armed with bow and arrows, with no education, government, religion, or respect for authority, and dedicated entirely to satisfying their shameless appetites, as if the miraculous waters of baptism had never washed away their sins."*

(Zorro, 10)

As the supposed educated Spanish were not able or did not want to comprehend the Indians' need for freedom and believed themselves and their principles to be superior, they concluded that "the Indians' insistence on clinging to their customs had to be the work of Satan – there was no other explanation" (Zorro, 11); that is "why the friars went out to hunt down and lasso the deserters and then whipped their doctrine of love and forgiveness into them" (Zorro, 11).

It is at this point that or Toypurnia or Chief Gray Wolf as she was called emerged. She was the daughter of Diego Salazar, a Spanish sailor who had deserted the Spanish ship and lived a long time among Indians until his death. Her mother, White Owl, was an Indian shaman and healer. After the death of her father, she lived on in her mother's tribe. There was a myth among Indians concerning her childhood. On an afternoon, when she was a few month old baby her mother, White Owl put her beneath a tree to take a bath in the river. While white Owl was in the river,

*"A wolf had approached the bundle wrapped in skins, picked it up in its jaws, and dragged it off into the woods. A desperate White Owl followed the animal's tracks for several days, but found no trace of the baby girl. During that summer the mother's hair turned white, and the tribe continued to search, until the last hope of finding the child had evaporated. At that point a ceremony was performed to guide her to the vast plains of the Great Spirit. White Owl refused to participate in the rites and never stopped scanning the horizon; she felt in her bones that her daughter was still alive. One early morning at the beginning of winter a filthy little creature emerged from the mist; she was naked and covered with dirt, and she was crawling with her nose to the ground. It was the lost child, growling like a dog and smelling like a wild animal. They named her Toypurnia, which in the language of her tribe means Daughter- of-Wolf... "*

(Zorro, 18)

She, who worn a wolf's head and disguised as a man, united several tribes and formed a group of native warriors and rose up "against the whites" (Zorro, 6). Therefore, Padre Mendoza asked Captain Alejandro de la Vega to come to San Gabriel mission to help him because as he claimed "he was not disposed to lose the fruit of his labor of years, and even less disposed to have neophytes spirited away. Once they left the mission, his Indians would fall prey to sin and return to living like savages" (Zorro,7). With the help of Captain de la Vega the Indian warriors were defeated and Toypurnia, their head, was captured injured. When they discovered that the injured warrior is a woman and a very beautiful one indeed, Captain de la Vega fell in love with her. While Padre Mendoza insisted to penalize her by hanging her, Captain de la Vega refused it and reminded the priest of her mixed blood, told him: "This woman is a mestiza, Padre, half Spanish by blood. You have jurisdiction over the Indians in your charge, but not over her. Only the governor of Alta California can set her sentence" (Zorro, 20). So, he went to Monterey to see the governor, Pedro Fages. Under Captain de la Vega's pleading, the governor agreed to change her death penalty to a long term imprisonment; then after, governor's wife, Dona Eulalia de Callis, gave a slyer proposal that represented on the whole the Colonial cunning plan in approaching and encountering the colonized,

*"In prison that woman will become a martyr for the Indians…Simply saying her name will be enough to cause them*

*to rebel again. I have a better solution. First of all, she must be baptized, as God wills. Then you bring her to me and I will take charge of the problem. I wager that in a year's time I will have converted this Toypurnia, Daughter-of-Wolf, wild Indian, into a Christian Spanish lady. In that way we will destroy her influence over the Indians once and for all."*
(Zorro, 24)

Their plan is reminiscence of what Edward said called the domestication of the exotics. According to Said, it is a phenomenon takes place when colonizer encounters colonized. Because the colonized land, its geography, people, language, religion, culture, and a host of other characteristics seem to be weird and exotic to the colonizer he tries to represent them as the second hand imitated version of his own stuffs; by so doing, he castrates their inherent potentialities and therefore lessens their threat as unknown objects. Simultaneously, through such a mental process the colonized people are prohibited from self-assertion. They get defined through the colonizer's eyes and become "domestic subjects of Euroimperialism" (Pratt, 1992, 4) or mere "deviation, a perversion" and an inferior imitation of colonizer's original issues.

At this point in the story, the process of domestication of the exotics begins to happen. Toypurnia was sent to Monterey to be tamed by the governor's wife because they thought that "she was a volcano waiting to explode in the mission, where the neophytes still had not recovered from the tumult of war" (Zorro, 24). Just before sending her to the governor's place, she converted into Christianity. By making Toypurnia a westernized copy of a Christian lady, they aimed to make impotent her Indian impulses and reduce her threat. Actually, the more she lived among them, the more she felt alienated from herself,
*"She was shocked by how much she had changed. She looked at herself in the mirror and could find no trace of Toypurnia; she saw only a woman with hard eyes and clenched lips. The need to live in a world foreign to her, and to stay out of trouble, had made her cautious and underhanded."*
(Zorro, 36)

Under the instructions of Dona Eulalia de Callis, she was turned into "a dazzling girl dressed and coiffed in the European mode" (*Zorro*, 26). Although her appearance resembled a European lady, nevertheless, Captain de la Vega who dreamt of marrying her knew that "he would never be able to present her to his family or to society in Spain…" (Zorro, 26)

Even after her marriage to Captain de la Vega and coming to his hacienda to live, the white colony spoke behind her back "commented on her…doubtful origin, her escapades on horseback, her naked bathing in the sea" that she "with Olympian indifference ignored" (Zorro, 28). Actually, she was not totally accepted and welcomed by the European settlers and regarded by them as their inferior. Although she was educated to behave like them, she did not belong to them and "no rancher would admit to having an Indian ancestor. To a man, they claimed Spanish heritage: white skin and pure blood" (Zorro, 34).

Although at the beginning of the novel's first part the colonized land and the natives are represented through the eyes of the colonizers, yet, the rest part of it provides the reader with a more objective viewpoint. It is through such a view point that the native Indians and their mother land get intermingled and almost mirror each other. In other words, the external nature and the natives' internal nature resemble in many ways.

First of all it is the character of Toypurnia. Her character actually resembles the natural environment surrounding Captain de la Vega's house. His house was built on a hill, close to the sea coast. Between the sea coast and the house there was "a labyrinth of caves, a sacred place to the Indians…Indians did not go there, out of respect for their ancestors, nor did the Spanish because of frequent landslides, and because it was easy to get lost in the maze" (Zorro, 28). That was the case with Regina too. Although Captain de la Vega possessed her through marrying her, she seemed to be unapproachable. Actually, after their marriage she gradually returned to her old habits. He

interpreted her behavior as "the betraying signs of [her] state of mind" (Zorro, 29); as a result, the gap between them began to widen day after day to the point that after some years Regina preferred not to confront him and " act[ed] behind his back" (Zorro, 36). It is one of the first instances in which the features of the land and the character get intermingled. Symbolically, although Captain de la Vega and his Spanish mates captured Toypurnia and endeavored to tame her under their own disciplines, they were not successful in approaching her and exploiting her soul. That is why he attributed her strange behavior to "inexperience in life as a newlywed, and to her closed nature" (Zorro, 29). The colonizers occupied the land, established their own principles there, made mimic men out of the natives, and made domesticated their exotic features; however, they were not able to invert the culture and capture the free spirits of the colonized natives; the free spirit that existed in the land too.

Upon her arrival at Captain de la Vegas residence, where she was arrested three years ago, her Indian impulses revived again and she left her dictated European mode of life. Being located once more in her native land and among her fellow Indians who worked in de la Vega's hacienda, she felt free to restore to her own nature and turned back to her old characteristics. In a short while, therefore, "…the dresses that had been made for her under Eulalia de Callis's guidance hung abandoned in the armoires, devoured by moths. She felt more comfortable going barefoot and wearing the rough clothing of the neophytes" (Zorro, 29). Those were the first impression of the external nature and surroundings on her character. The land reminded her of those impulses that were kept hidden for years under the European instructions and Christian catechism; the instructions that deprived her of her exotic awe and made her a domesticated version of European forms. Her native land infused her with the long forgotten and suppressed qualities.

The period of her pregnancy is another instance of her being united with the spirit of the land. During that period, Ana, an Indian neophyte, also pregnant, was sent to de la Vega's hacienda to work as a servant there. Soon the two women became close friends. The two pregnant women went to the sea and swim together with the dolphins, "…sacred creatures that swim in circles to keep the world safe and in good order", that knew "the two women were pregnant, and lightly brushed past them to give them strength and courage at the moment of giving birth" (Zorro, 30). Actually, some of the symbolic meanings of dolphins connote the themes of duality, "being in two worlds at once", and the idea of resurrection (http://www.whats-your-sign.com/dolphin-meaning-dolphin-symbolism.html). The dolphins, as part the of the surrounding nature, foreshadow the birth of a baby, a mestizo, whose hybrid blood and culture helps him to survive and through whom the dual and often opposing voices come together and start a negotiation.

The third and fourth instances of the unity of place and character are related to two natural catastrophes, a fire and an earthquake that happened there. Actually, the babies' births coincide with a fire that was recorded as the most catastrophic event since the city has been founded. The fire destroyed everything including the houses and the helpless castles that "had nowhere to escape to" (Zorro, 30). After a lot of damages the winds changed direction and, therefore, the fire stopped just before it arrived to de la Vega hacienda. The Indians interpreted the event "as an excellent augury for the two newborns in the house" (Zorro, 30). Then, Diego and Bernardo were born. Upon the arrival of the colonizers to the land, there began a period of denial and inversive struggles among the people of the both sides of the divide, i.e. the colonizers and the colonized. The colonizers repressed the colonized and the colonized withstood them. The colonized people were ultimately kept silent and they were suppressed. The idea of the mestizo would be a solution to such a conflict. The process of hybridization paves the way for the different cultures to sit together and enter into a dialogue. Such a process has the potentiality to open up negotiation among various cultural groups and extinguish the fire of negation. It is through Diego de la Vega, the new born baby of mixed ancestry that the fiery Toypurnia and fiery Spaniards come into reconciliation. The natural fire and its unjustifiable sudden stop near de la Vega's hacienda just before the birth of the two children may thus foreshadow the negotiating force that the mestizaje identity of the newborn will bring and its potentiality to subvert the master discourse through the process of hybridization.

The next natural catastrophe is the earthquake that destroyed the church. From the time Toypurnia and her Indian tribe had attacked the church and its surrounding lands years ago, it had been damaged a lot; besides,

"termites were devouring the wood in the building" and the building was vulnerable to fall at any instance. Earthquake was the last blow for the church roof to be collapsed. Symbolically, Christianity is part of the colonial discourse; the collapse of the church, which was partly done through Toypurnia's attack, termites, and the earthquake shows the anxiety that already existed within it and the negative inversive attitude of the natives towards it, though it was kept oppressed. The name of the river in the area, "Jesus de los Temblores" (Zorro, 47), can be a symbolic witness to the instability and anxiety of the dominant discourse. The natural catastrophes and the explosion of nature, therefore, symbolize the natives' struggle to undermine the instable master discourse.

When Diego and Bernardo grew up enough, Regina brought them to the Indian village. Through visiting Indian tribes and lands the character of the future Zorro was gradually made. It is actually the most important instances in which the nature of the native land and the character got united. As I stated it before, there was a labyrinth of caves near de la Vega's hacienda that nobody went there. It was White Owl, Diego's grandmother and Regina's mother, who took the boys there for the first time. She explained to the boys that the caves and their various sections served as a map for those who wanted to initiate a spiritual quest to find out their own centers and reach okahue, which is in White Owl's words "the five basic virtues: honor, justice, respect, dignity, and courage" (Zorro, 38); she also personified the caves and gave them human attributes while explain them,

"*She explained that the caves were divided into seven sacred directions, a basic map for spiritual journeys, which is why in ancient times initiates had gone there to seek their own centers, which ideally should coincide with the center of the world, where life originates. When that correspondence was reached…a luminous flame from the bowels of the earth blazed up and danced in the air for a long while, bathing the initiates with light and warmth. She explained that the caves were natural temples…and they should enter them only with good in mind. "Whoever goes in with bad intentions will be swallowed up, and after a while the cave will spit out his bones," she told them. She added that if you help others, as the Great Spirit commanded, a space in your body opens to receive blessings; that is the only way to prepare yourself for okahue."*

(Zorro, 37)

Later White owl conducted a rite to make a man out of them and "put them in contact with the Great Spirit so their destinies would be revealed to them" (Zorro, 72). She did so because she had the ability to foresee the future. It was revealed to her that "there was no way to hold back the invaders; soon her people would disappear" as "the colonists were more and more numerous, and they were insatiable" (Zorro, 72). Before their arrival, Alta California had an idyllic nature and was bestowed with abundant natural resources. But they ruined nature and their herds "trampled the ground and the hills dried up" (Zorro, 72). Therefore, the two boys should take refuge to nature and its Great Spirit in order to realize their future mission in resisting the colonizers' usurp. The two boys were left alone in forest for a couple of days in order to undertake "the four stages of their initiation" (Zorro, 72). After passing the first two stages successfully, they were obliged to leave each other and continue their journey alone. White owls told them that they would find out "their vision during that period" if only the Great Spirit was please with them (Zorro, 74). Of course, the boys were successful in realizing their future missions. Bernardo's future mission revealed to him in the form of an orphaned young horse that followed him for hours. Bernardo feeds the foal and named it Tornado that means rotating winds because he hoped it to run like the wind. He decided to tame the horse and give it to Diego. Surprisingly, the horse was gone the other day. Then, Bernardo found out what he was destined to be in the future. Actually, the horse was his "spirit guide" and he was supposed to develop the horse's characteristics, i.e. "loyalty, strength, and endurance" (Zorro, 76) in following and supporting Zorro. He was chosen to be a supporter of future Zorro and a one who would be a part of Zorro triangle.

Diego was also summoned his future career. He saw a fox that followed him likewise along the path. On his way, Diego was bitten by a viper and fainted. The fox, then, appeared to Bernardo and directed him to where Diego was fallen unconscious. White Owl explained Zorro's future mission as follows,

*"The fox saved you. That Zorro is you totemic animal, your spiritual guide…You must cultivate its skill, its cleverness, its intelligence. Your mother is the moon, and your home, the cave. Like the fox, you will discover what cannot be seen in the dark, you will disguise yourself, and you will hide by day and act by night."*

(Zorro, 80)

Zorro is another name for fox. Like fox, he was destined to live a double life. Diego, a biologically hybrid man, was

chosen to play the role of the masked hero. Actually, the character of the future Zorro was been formed in an in-between space; from one side he approached Indian society and got more familiar with their world view, from the other side he approached Spanish society. He was simultaneously instructed with two world views. "White Owl was nourishing [his] indigenous roots; Alejandro de la Vega was beginning Diego's education as a hidalgo" (Zorro, 40). While Indian society taught him that human beings are equal, his father favored class discriminations and superiority of some raced over the others. Therefore, though he liked Bernardo and "favored [him] among the Indian servants" he could not ignore the social and racial differences and did not treat him as his own son. His discourse was a dominant one in which God had set such differences. He full heartedly believed in the supposed hierarchies so much so that,

*"…he never questioned the hierarchical order in which he had grown up or the absolute superiority of his race, his nation, and his faith. Diego and Bernardo were different by birth; they would never be equals, and it was his opinion that the sooner they understand that, the fewer problems they would have in the future."*
(Zorro, 41)

Simultaneously though, Regina treated the two boys just the same, because in her tribe "no person was superior to another because of birth" (Zorro, 42). It was in an in-between of these opposing discourses that Diego and Bernardo grew up. Actually Eulalia de Callis sent the family some presents among which there were some Italian fencing swords and a book written by a Spanish fencing master, Manuel Escalante who later became Diego's fencing teacher while he resided in Spain. Thank to the Spanish lady's gifts and their frequent visit to Indian villages, they learned lessons from both Spanish and Indian skills and used both sides of the divide to improve themselves in order to be able to attain at okahue,

*"They learned to flourish the epee according to Maestro Escalante's impeccable instructions, to gallop bareback on their horses, to use the whip and lasso, and to hang by their feet like bats from the eaves of the house. The Indians taught them to dive and rip shellfish from the rocks, to follow a prey for days to get a kill, to craft bows and arrows, and to endure pain and fatigue without complaining."*
(Zorro, 42)

By flourishing his both Indian and Spanish sides, he created a luminal space within which his hybridized character developed and got an opportunity to subvert the colonial discourse. The hybrid character of Zorro shows that the okahue and mestizo are the same. In other words, the ideal state of okahue can be interpreted as the mestizaje identity because it is the only chance for the colonized natives to appropriate the means of power and put an end to their imposed silence.

The first two settings, California at the first instance and Spain, represent the opposing voices. They also demonstrate how each of them influenced the process of Zorro's character formation. The two place settings, actually, served as a contact zone in which the variety of opposing views and voices came together in order to form the ultimate hybridized version of the setting and the character, i.e. the final portrayal of California and Zorro the mestizo.

### 4.2 Second, third, and fourth parts: Spain, Diego de la Vega, and the Europeans

Ever since Diego initiated his journey toward Spain, he undertook a European training procedure. The influence of the new land was quiet apparent in the formation of Zorro who had already sprung from indigenous roots. So he arrived at Barcelona. At that time Spain was rushed and occupied by France. Despite the apparent "incomparable elegance of that city [Barcelona]" (Zorro, 111), it was rotten inside. The political condition of the country was riotous. There were Spanish guerrilla fighters who opposed and fought against French rule. Ordinary people protected them. Their resistance "wore down the occupation troops, but it also kept the country in ruins" (Zorro,

132). Although Spain ruled over California and exploited its resources, yet it suffered upheavals from within and its authority lacked appropriate stability. In other words, although it was regarded as a great power in the Latin American peripheries, it lost its authority in the metropolis.

The shaken authority of Spain can be symbolically represented in the way the author describes the European setting. The description of La Ciudadela fort is a witness to this statement. Actually, the fort supported Barcelona with its thick walls that encircled the city. The fort had a fame of being impregnable. Nobody had been able to enter or quit it without the permission of the supposed authority. Inside it, there was a jail for keeping the political prisoners. However, at the time of Diego's arrival, it was under the control of French administrator, Monsieur Roland Duchamps, who was the legal agent of French government in the occupied Spain and Spain had no control over it. Actually the fort is a microcosmic structure that stands for the macrocosm of colonial discourse. It indicates the instability of the colonial discourse and its apparent authority. At that time, the political condition of Spain, a colonial power in Americas, was terribly threatened by France. Again, this fact is symbolically indicated in the description of Tomas de Romeu' house that Diego and Bernardo resided. Upon their arrival Diego and Bernardo resided in his house. He was a friend of Diego's father who led a seemingly lavish life. He and his two daughters, Juliana and Isabel, lived in a very big house. Its size intimidated the two young boys at first so much so that they "did not notice how rundown it was" (Zorro, 113); yet, after a couple of months Diego found out that Tomas was not as rich and noble as he seemed to be. As a matter of fact, he was going to lose what he had inherited from his wife. The bleak and neglected condition of the house represents the image of colonial discourse. Although it seemed to be mighty and authoritarian in appearance, it has been already shaken and full of anxieties. Therefore, it was an apt opportunity for the colonized people to subvert it through appropriating its own tools.

So, Diego applied for Maestro Manuel Escalante's fencing academy and was accepted. He learned the European art of fencing from a European master and taught it, in turn, to his Indian milk brother, Bernardo. At the end of each fencing class his master always talked to him about the nobility of that art and the superiority and "the military glories of Spain" (Zorro, 132). However, Diego learned the European craft and later used it to subvert the Spanish tyranny in the New World. He later got acquainted with a secret society called La Justicia which had been established two hundred years before. It was

*"a reaction to the power of the Inquisition, the fearsome arm of the church that since the sixteenth century had labored to defend the spiritual unity of Catholics by persecuting Jews, Lutherans, heretics, sodomites, blasphemes, sorcerers, seers, devil worshipers, warlocks and witches, astrologers, and alchemists, as well as anyone who read banned books."*
(Zorro, 154)

At that time, however, the aims of La Justicia went beyond fighting just religious oppression. It aimed to combat other forms of oppression such as "that of the French in Spain and of slavery in foreign lands" (Zorro, 154). Therefore, the European craft in Diego and Bernardo's hands, turned to be an anti-European weapon in resisting colonial rules. In other words, Zorro at first is a mimic man who just imitated the European style; gradually, however, the mimic part of his character confronted its native part and the ambivalence of his hybrid identity acquired its voice.

By appropriating European tools, i.e. learning the art of fencing to the full and later entering the secret La Justicia, he became ready to penetrate the colonial discourse. Such a penetration is symbolically shown in his plan to rescue a group of innocent people who were imprisoned in La Ciudadela fort. Under the disguise of Zorro he secretly entered Duchamp's residence, threatened him, and consequently forced him to command the release of those prisoners. As such the cracking of colonial discourse is heard because he gained the power to penetrate the impregnable fort. As the fort showed to be penetrable, so the colonial discourse was. What Zorro or other colonial subjects must do, was to recognize the anxieties of the discourse and penetrate it likewise.

After King Ferdinand VII restored his occupied throne and the French usurpers forced to leave Spain, Tomas de Romeo was executed because he was not part of the Spanish King's alliance. Diego, Romeo's daughters, and Nuria were forced to leave Barcelona and later Spain. They travelled under the disguise of a group of pilgrims and aimed to cross "the widest part of Spain on foot" (Zorro, 244) because they did not want to be recognized by their political enemies. At this time quiet a new face of Spain was revealed that was totally different from the "incomparable elegance of that city [Barcelona]" (Zorro, 111). Behind the elegant and civilized appearance of Spain, there existed a coarse, cruel, and savage face. Through an artistic description of the land and the place setting Allende portrays this new face and provides the readers with the double nature of the European land that, in its turn, would be a symbol of colonial discourse,

*"They had traveled across half of the Basque country when winter set in without mercy. Sudden wintry blasts penetrated to the bone, and chill winds kept them shivering beneath wet mantles…Nights were longer, the fog denser, their progress slower, the frost heavier, and the journey more difficult, but the landscape was breathtakingly beautiful. Green and more green, hills of green velvet, enormous forests in every shade of green, rivers and waterfalls of crystalline, emerald green water."*

(Zorro, 258)

The duality shown in the description of the setting actually reveals a more profound binary opposition in colonial discourse. On the surface it is stable and elegant; yet from inside it suffers from a great host of anxieties. Like California that reflects the Indian heritage and interacts, so Spain with its duality of nature embodies the shaken discourse of the colonizers too.

### 4.3 Fifth part: Alta California, Diego de la Vega, and Zorro the mestizo

Before initiating his journey to Spain, Diego had already got acquainted with the idea of okahue. Until then, okahue was an abstract concept that had no real social counterpart for him. While he was in California, he did not seriously think about the exploitation of the colonizers and the struggle for independence by the colonized. It was actually during his journey to Spain that he took a look on a bulk of books belonging to the captain of the ship, Santiago de Leon,

*"…among them he found a couple of essays about possible independence for the colonies. Diego admired the example of the United States, which had freed itself from the English yoke, but it had not occurred to him that similar aspirations on the part of the Spanish colonists in America might be praiseworthy until he read the captain's publications."*

(Zorro, 104)

In fact, revolutionary Santiago "doubted nearly everything that formed the intellectual and moral world of Alejandro de la Vega, Padre Mendoza, and Diego's school master" (Zorro, 104) who stands for the colonial discourse in California. Visiting Santiago who supported the idea of "abolishing the monarchy and making the colonies independent" was crucial in the development of Diego's character who until then thought of European kingdom as "divine in origin" (Zorro, 105). Such ideas gradually gave him a voice to challenge the issues he had already been forbidden to discuss. Like the indigenous natives of his mother side he was kept silenced and did not dare to challenge "the rigid percepts hammered into his brain since his birth" (Zorro, 104). It was actually after his acquaintance with Santiago that "he dared for the first time to talk about subjects he had never discussed with his

father" (Zorro, 104-105). Therefore, he gained his revolutionary thought from among European books.

The other European thing that Zorro was equipped with was his famous Zorro attire. He admired and imitated pirate Jean Lafitte' style of clothing. So, he decided to choose Zorro's attire "on the model of Jean Lafitte" (Zorro, 325). The idea occurred to Diego while he tried to rescue several slaves who were brought to Lafitte's property to be later sold. He wore the same black attire that Lafitte always wore. In the darkness of the night the guards took him for Lafitte "who always dressed in black" (Zorro, 306). He could, thus, succeeded to visit the miserable slaves and gain necessary information. From then on, he decided to disguise under Lafitte's cloth. This gave him an apt opportunity to penetrate his enemies without the fear of being known. In other words, he undermines the authority of his enemies by their own tools. This point can be applied to colonized society in a larger scale. Actually, by appropriating and imitating colonizer's means the colonized people are able to penetrate the dominant discourse and take their silenced voices back.

Apart from his European equipments, he had Indian heritage that I have already explained. He, also, acquired certain non-European experiences that helped him to develop the hybrid personality of Zorro. While in Spain, Diego and Bernardo made friend with a tribe of gypsies, a group of wandering people who "for centuries… had roamed throughout the world, persecuted and despised" (Zorro, 147). They were originally from India whose ancestors "had left India several hundred years before and made their way through all of Asia and Europe before ending up in Spain, where they were treated as badly as in other places" (Zorro, 147). Except for commercial reasons they had no relations with non-gypsies and foreigners because they did not want to endanger "the purity of their breed and their traditions" (Zorro, 147). Among them, Amalia and Pelayo had a significant role in character formation of Zorro. Amalia was a young gypsy widow and Pelayo was her brother. For them, Diego was not simply a foreigner; rather he was like themselves, i.e. "a foreigner everywhere…a Gypsy from a lost tribe" (Zorro, 147). Maybe it was the reason that made Amalia courageous enough to break through her tribal norms and make love to Diego. She gave Diego opportunity to satisfy his sexual desires; by so doing, she did a terrible risk and trespassed against the boundaries of her tribe. Actually, making love and unity of two bodies connotes the unities of the souls and the comingling of two cultures, two different sets of standards, and ultimately two voices. Sexual intercourse is set as a contact zone within which two different cultures come together and a hybridized process initiates. Diego as the son of a Spaniard and Amalia as an Indian gipsy copulated and so contributed greatly to the formation of the hybridized Zorro. Like his sister, Pelayo contributed to the formation of Zorro as well. He gave Diego a wonderful sword called Justin, "a very special weapon…made from an alloy of metals, the secret of which was fifteen hundred years old and came from India" (Zorro, 263). Diego called it Justin because he aimed to use it for "just causes" (Zorro, 263).

There are, therefore, many elements of various opposing cultures in hand to form the character of Zorro. Upon his return to Alta California, he was accompanied by Isabel, Tomas de Romeu's courageous and adventurous daughter. Alta California had changed a lot since Diego's departure. Rafael Moncada, the envoy plenipotentiary of King Ferdinand VII, proved to be a cruel administrator; "he represented the negative elements of colonization; he had come to make a quick fortune and then leave. To him the Indians were beasts of burden" (Zorro, 362). There, in the new land, Diego revealed the real Zorro with the help of Isabel and Bernardo. In other words, Zorro is no longer a single character. Zorro is a triangle of three distinct characters, Isabel (Spanish), Bernardo (Indian), and Diego (hybrid). Actually, Isabel and Bernardo wore Zorro's black attire and helped Diego in his missions. As Isabel put it forth "you [Diego] will be Zorro, and Bernardo and I will help you" (Zorro, 383). The final paragraph of the novel shows this point very clearly; the fact that Zorro is no longer a single figure but a combination of three characters of various cultural backgrounds. The character of Zorro like that of Diego is a hybrid one, a combination of Spanish and Indian. The moment the cultures come together, Zorro is emerged and Indian's promised okahue is revealed,

*"The brothers put on their disguises, and the three zorros formed a circle inside the old Indian medicine wheel the brothers had laid out in their youth. With Bernardo's knife they each made a cut on their left hands…At that moment, when the mixed blood of the three friends dripped onto the center of the circle, they thought they saw a*

*brilliant light surge from the depths of the earth and dance in the air for a few seconds. It was the okahue that grandmother White Owl had promised".*
(Zorro, 384)

## 5. Conclusion

Allende's *Zorro*, is actually the myth of mestizo; the quest of a character to attain at an ideal point, mestizaje; a state for remedying the social discriminations and reconciling cultural forces. In *Zorro* the characters and the place settings are interchangeably change role. In other words, the different milieus of the story reflect the features of the character in his various stages of development through all the tensions, contradictions, and ambiguities until he gets at his final destination, an ever culturally hybridization process known as mestizo. To change into the masked hero, Diego de la Vega undertakes a development of character that is simultaneously a process of hybridization. Such a process can be applied to the settings as well. In other words, the three geographical settings stand for three cultural entities that represent Diego in his various stages of character development. Although at the beginning of the novel California has already been occupied and ruled by the Spanish colonizers, its indigenous population, i.e. American Indian tribes, try to keep themselves culturally intact. The body of the land is ruled by the Spanish; yet its spirit belongs to the natives. Surprisingly therefore, as the son of a Spanish Captain Alejandro de la Vega, Diego is more Indian than Spanish and much more impressed by the native culture of American Indians and is governed culturally by their cults. It is their spiritual instructions that initially reveal to him his future mission of searching for equality and justice. After the initial phase he goes to Europe in order to penetrate the discourse of power through learning and imitating their styles. He returns to Alta California again as he has already turned into the masked man; the process of Zorro formation is not yet completed. There with the help of his two friends, Bernardo an American Indian and Isabel a Spanish girl they form a triangle that altogether is called Zorro. The resulted Zorro is not a single character this time, he is the combination of a European, Indian and mestizo figures. It is at this point when different cultures comingle that the desired status of hero formation begins. To sum up, California and Diego at the beginning of the story are in the phase of abrogation. His passage to Europe ignites the phase of appropriation. Returning to Alta California, he and the land both serve as a contact zone in which different rather opposing voices come together to form a hybridized land and a mestizo character known as Zorro.

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